



## MEETING MINUTES / 18 JANUARY 2017

### ATTENDANCE:

Present: Farley, Showell, Armbruster (call-in), Baldwin, Coons, Hampton, Lardizzone, McMullen, Newman, Newstadt (call-in), Sarg, Seppala (call-in), and Smith **92.8%**

Absences: Bradley

Guests: Paula Witcher (First State Women Warriors), Vivian Starnes (DAV Auxiliary), Liz Byers-Jiron (Veterans Awareness Center), Joseph Rodriguez (Delaware Veterans Post 1), John Pastor (Delaware Veterans Post 1)

### CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS:

During Moment of Silence, asked all to acknowledge Commissioner Carroll's passing, success for Governor Carney, and success for President-elect Trump

### MEETING MINUTES:

The December minutes need to reflect that Commissioner Newstadt was present via "call-in" and not absent  
Commissioner Lardizzone made the motion and Commissioner McMullen seconded for approval

### ADMINISTRATIVE REMARKS:

#### **Wilmington VAMC – Vince Kane, Interim Associate Director for Operations**

The Sussex CBOC building schedule remains on time but there is no projected opening date

The administrative structure will be improved with the addition of these positions:

- Associate Chief of Staff (oversees CBOCs)
- Medical Director (oversees CBOCs)
- Addition CBOC Administrative Positions (in-house)

These positions will allow clinical personnel to focus on clinical, not administrative, tasks

Some non-VA functions (i.e. ortho) will be moved to CBOCs and local civilian resources

- This reduces patient travel to the Wilmington VAMC

Provided center updates during Veteran Service Officer workgroup

- Expanding the group to include more than service officers
- Will focus on improvements for Wilmington VAMC

Recruiting to fill the center's Director position and advertising for over 100 clinical positions

(McMullen) Has the CBOC ancillary care expanded?

Yes, the Sussex CBOC will have that care, if not available, the Veteran can go to the Wilmington VAMC or receive care with a community partner

(Sarg) What is the projected opening date for the Sussex CBOC?

No date yet, will release when the build is confirmed and the equipment test are accomplished

(Newstadt) Can you give an ortho contract status?

It should be finalized by May or June

**Delaware Veterans Home (DVH) – Bill Peterson, Director:**

The resident population is down to 105

- Based on work to the Gold (dementia) Suite

Former Governor Buckson (resident) passed away

The bathing suite drawings were approved, the work is going to bid, and work should begin around 1 March

During the Friends of the Veterans Home meeting, the group proposed to fund an enclosure for the front porch and fund the dental suite project

The registered nursing positions are being filled with the help of human resources and the nurse recruiter

Commissioner Lardizzone made a motion to use \$25K, from the Veteran Commission Fund, to support the front porch project. Motion was approved

**Home of the Brave, Director Jessica Finan:**

Presently one bed in male home and three beds in female home

Milford Elks provided a \$2K grant to make the male bathroom handicap accessible

The home will no longer be listed in the Combined Federal Campaign because of a \$340.00 application fee. The home was previously listed for free and cannot afford the fee

Compassion for Cats (agency) is helping control the home's stray cat issue with neutering and adoption

**DOL – Veteran Employment and Training Service, State Director, Dave Rich,**

Not present

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

**Liz Byers-Jiron, Delaware Stand Down**

The stand down kickoff meeting is 26 January / 1415

The Wilmington VAMC was informed of the "Give a Vet a Smile" program and they are supportive

- The program may move to a sliding fee scale versus providing free care

The Female Veterans' Tea is scheduled for 25 March / 1400 at Delaware Veterans Post 2

**Paula Witcher, First State Women's Warriors**

The group is seeking to adopt homeless female Veterans throughout the year

The group is working on a fundraiser in April at the Texas Roadhouse, more to follow

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Bear Veterans Memorial Cemetery, Commissioner Armbruster:**

Interments - 72

Commissioner Carroll was interred on 17 January

New construction can be seen throughout the site

**Millsboro Veterans Memorial Cemetery, Commissioner Bradley:**

Interments - 27

Cemetery Administrator Greg Bee's son Josh passed away. The funeral is today / 1700 at the Rogers Funeral Home, 301 Lakeview Ave, Milford

**Health and Human Services, Commissioner Sarg:**

Commissioner Sarg participated on the Brain Injury, Employment, and First State Community Partners forums

With the Delaware Veterans Home there is a difference between "approved for admission" versus "applying for admission"

- The medical condition is reviewed and is a key determinant of admission

**Legislative Affairs, Commissioner McMullen**

The Commission will present Legislative Concerns to the Veterans Affairs Committee on 25 January / 1230 in House Chambers

(Sarg) Discussed House Bill 28 (Dental Hygiene) as it may impact the Delaware Veterans Home dental suite

**Commemorative Affairs, Commissioner Showell**

Nothing to report

**ORGANIZATIONAL REPORTS:**

Commissioner McMullen (AFSA)

The new Dover AFB Chapter Executive Committee was sworn in

Commissioner Armbruster (AL)

Departmental meeting is scheduled for 20 January

There are five contestants for the oratorical contest

National Commander's Delaware visit is 15 – 17 March

Departmental convention at Dover Downs 9 - 10 July

Oratorical program is beginning for youth throughout the state

Commissioner Bradley (AMVETS)

Not present

Commissioner Smith (DELVETS)

Commissioner filled stockings at the Wilmington VAMC

Organization donated \$1.5K to Wilmington VAMC

Commissioner Lardizzone (DAV)

Attended meeting regarding World War I memorial with Sipple and Sons Monuments

National is meeting on Capitol Hill on 28 February

Commissioner Coons (KWVA)

Chapter one has stand along status and chapter two is applying for stand along status

National has decided that the remaining chapters will retain their departmental status

Commissioner Farley (MCL)

The final Toys for Tots financial information is not available

Governor Markell hosted a thank you event for the homeless Veteran teams on 4 January

Chairman Sarg (MOAA)

Will continue to forward organizational legislative updates

- Veterans can support via the attached links

The First State Military Academy is now included in the organization's scholarship drive

(MOPH)

Not present

Commissioner Seppala (MOWW)

The Delaware Military Heritage Museum hosted a historical event on 17 December

Executive Director Kirby is the scheduled guest speaker on 14 February

Commissioner Newman (VFW)

The Arctic Blast, Bowers Beach, supporting Veteran mental health concerns and the Dover AFB Mental Health Clinic is scheduled for 21 January

Red, White, and Blue Gala, supporting Veteran Services, is scheduled for 4 March

The National legislative conference, on Capitol Hill, is scheduled for 28 February

The organization recognizes the University of Delaware's Blue Hen Veterans Group as a viable Veterans organization

Commissioner Baldwin (VVA)

The departmental meeting was 30 January

Applications for the First State Military Academy and Delaware Military Academy have reached capacity

Commissioner Newstadt (At Large)

Nothing to report

Commissioner Showell (At Large)

Deployment Ceremony was 8 January

General Vavala announced his retirement and General Carol Timmons has been selected to replace him

- General Vavala's Open House is 31 January / 1100 – 1800 at the Biden Center

- The Change of Command is 12 February / 1400 at the Army Aviation Center

Commissioner Hampton (At Large)

Through conversations with Veterans, noticed the Commission's name is getting out into the community

#### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS:**

DVTF: Requests 11, Granted 9 (81.8%), Awarded \$10,444.77 and Balance \$41,222.41

Drafting a customer service survey, for all locations, to document customer satisfaction

Seeking to upgrade the conference room to allow audio-visual capability for Commission and visitors

Stephen Austin University has asked our Veterans to participate in a PTSD survey. The survey link will be forwarded to Commissioners for distribution throughout their organizations

#### **TERM EXPIRATION:**

Hampton 22 February 2017

#### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

Committee Positions (OPEN)

- Commissioners must select a Committee (Cemetery, Health/Human Services, Legislative, Commemorative) for membership

World War I Memorial (OPEN)

- Commission Lardizzone is working the memorial draft with Sipple and Sons Monuments

Information Table at Legislative Hall (CLOSED)

- The Commission met State Delegates and explained the agency's mission

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

Nothing was recommended

**ITEMS FOR THE GOOD AND WELFARE OF THE ORGANIZATION:**

Commissioner Newstadt recommended inviting the new Adjutant General, General Timmons, to the April Commission meeting. Director Kirby recommended the Commission visit General Timmons at her headquarters. The Commission agreed to the later recommendation and Director Kirby will work with Vice Chair Showell to arrange the visit (coinciding with April meeting)

A recommendation was made to present a Commission recognition (i.e. plaque, certificate) to General Vavala. Director Kirby informed the group that the general does not desire gifts, he prefers donations to preferred organizations. The Commission recommended donating 100lbs of food to the Delaware Food Bank, from the Commission, on behalf of General Vavala

**SPECIAL SESSION:**

None

**NEXT MEETING:** Tuesday, 21 February 2017 at 10:00 AM  
**LOCATION:** Delaware Commission of Veterans Affairs